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Johnson Club Papers by Various Hands. London, T. Fisher Unwin, 1920. 238 pp. 8vo.

The first series of the *Johnson Club Papers* appeared in 1899. The present volume is the second series. In general, there is little difference between the two; each consists of a selection from the papers read at the quarterly meetings of the club, a fact which, at times, mars their excellence as literary essays. Moreover, one misses in the second a certain exuberant enthusiasm and humor which the first possessed. The papers are uniformly interesting; but, with one exception, they lack that basis of exact and exhaustive knowledge which ought to lie beneath every attempt at literary or psychological interpretation.

The exception is Henry B. Wheatley's paper, *Johnson's Monument and Parr's Epitaph on Johnson*. He brings forward some new material—correspondence and the like—which illuminates a post-mortem phase of Johnson's biography. Johnson had been dead twelve years before his statue was actually in place. 'Hawkins, Reynolds, and Boswell all died before the monument was finished, and Burke before sufficient contributions were obtained' (p. 227). One cause for much of the trouble was Dr. Samuel Parr. 'Parr was a man of great learning, with a singular lack of judgment. Having little or no sense of humour, he was continually making himself ridiculous. At the same time he was a formidable opponent, ever ready with a literary rapier as well as a bludgeon' (p. 228). In an evil hour he was asked to write the epitaph for the monument. From this point the account becomes excruciatingly funny. Of course the inscription must be in Latin—and in the proper Latin! Even Cicero was not good enough! Then poor Johnson must be deprived of his birthplace and of his title of Royal Academician because the Romans knew not Lichfield nor the Royal Academy. Finally, Parr reached the zenith of pedantry by hesitating to designate Bacon, the maker of the statue, by *sculptor* 'because he found in Coelius Rhodiginus that the art of statuary is divided into five sorts' with various names (p. 237).

Coming as it does at the end of the series, Mr. Wheatley's essay is positively refreshing after the often airy and speculative papers that precede it. The method of most of these is to take texts from Boswell and use them as starting points for excursions into various fields. The best of this sort are A. B. Walkley's *Johnson and the*

Theatre, interesting for its discussion of *Irene*, H. S. Scott's *Johnson's Character as Shown in his Writings*, which applies Johnson's statements about other writers to himself, and E. S. Roscoe's *Dr. Johnson and the Law*. Others of the same general sort are George Radford's *Johnson's Dictionary*, John O'Connor's *Dr. Johnson and Ireland*, Sir Charles Russell's *Dr. Johnson and the Catholic Church*, E. S. P. Haynes' *Dr. Johnson on Liberty*, and L. S. Hughes' *Dr. Johnson's Expletives*. Sir Chartres Biron's *Dr. Johnson and Dr. Dodd*, already a good essay, would be a good piece of scholarship, if Sir Chartres had taken advantage of the fact that the Dodd papers are now accessible.

Two others I single out: L. C. Thomas' *Sir Joshua Reynolds* and Edward Clodd's *Dr. Johnson and Lord Monboddo*. In the first, Reynolds is portrayed as an absolutely one-sided character, always kind and free-handed, with a temper quite unsoured by the world. This picture is false for two reasons: first, that no man could ever be so uniformly perfect as Mr. Thomas' Sir Joshua; and secondly, that a very short examination of, for instance, Sir Joshua's relations with his sister discloses a distinctly tart side to his nature. One of Mr. Thomas' own illustrations, Reynolds' mock dialogue with Johnson (p. 192), seems to show more than a trace of this side. The other paper, *Dr. Johnson and Lord Monboddo*, is stimulating by reason of the many questions it suggests, few of which are satisfactorily answered by the paper. Lord Monboddo, a noted Scotch jurist and philosopher contemporary with Johnson, a man sometimes credited with being a precursor of Darwin, in remarking the likeness between man and the great apes, unfortunately noticed the tail as an essential difference, and so pounced upon the idea not only that men had once had tails, but that there were probably tribes of men still possessing them. According to him, we lost our caudal appendages by dint of sitting upon them and wearing them away. Of course his contemporaries passed over the really sound ideas and leapt with one accord upon the tail. Here Mr. Clodd had a splendid opportunity—and let it pass. Was Monboddo really a great thinker laughed into oblivion by his own age because he lacked a sense of humor himself? or was he simply a slavish disciple of Plato and Aristotle, serving up their ideas with a few travellers' tales for seasoning? Was he a *pre-thinker*, or only a *pre-guesser*, if one may make such a distinction? Why did not

Johnson, a great classical scholar himself, take more kindly to a man who seems very like him in many ways? The only way to answer these questions satisfactorily would be to read Monboddo's works through carefully, judging them by their intrinsic merit alone; and this Mr. Clodd has not done. Perhaps nobody except William Knight¹ has gone through the twelve volumes of his two principal works for over a century. As to his connection with science, a paper by May M. Jarvis in the *Transactions of the Texas Academy of Science* for 1907 gives a modern scientist's opinion, based upon parts of Monboddo's *Antient Metaphysics*. Here is an opportunity to rediscover and map a lost mind (for Knight's treatment, though good, is not adequate); Mr. Clodd's paper only feebly scratches the surface.

It is difficult for a critic to censure a book which has given him pleasure. Many of these essays have real charm, though to a reader of Boswell they offer little that is new. They are pleasantly readable, written with the assurance of men used to speak with authority; but we have the right to expect something a little less superficial from a society bearing the name of Johnson. The multitude of chatty books nowadays crowds real authority off our library shelves; and this, when all is said, is only another chatty book about Johnson.

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TOUTES CHOSSES

An interesting instance of the attraction of an adjective to an adjacent noun that it does not really modify is found in the common expression "toutes choses," where this expression is in apparent apposition to a preceding series of nouns.¹ A good example occurs in Renan, *Fragments philosophiques*, p. 322 (1876): "Le devoir, le dévouement, le sacrifice, toutes choses dont l'histoire est pleine, sont inexplicables sans Dieu." It is evident that the sense here is: "Le devoir, le dévouement, le sacrifice, [qui sont] tous

¹ *Monboddo and his Contemporaries*, London, 1901.

² Professor H. Carrington Lancaster points out that this construction is found with other nouns than *choses*, and furnishes the following case: "l'éducation qu'il a reçue, l'organisation politique, l'état social, toutes causes de son malheur," H. Gaillard, *Emile Augier et la comédie sociale*, p. 133. (1910). So far as my personal observation has extended, this construction, in contemporary French, is more common with *choses* than with any other noun.